

THOUGHTS
ON THE
TIMES,
AND THE
SILK MANUFACTURE;
SHEWING

Its UTILITY, and the great Loss that is occasioned by
the Importation of

FRENCH and ITALIAN *wrought* SILKS.

WITH THE

Cause of the WEAVERS Dissatisfaction.

AND

A Remedy against any *future Apprehensions* of a Distur-
bance of the public Peace by their Discontent.

“ When Ministers of State are fired with a *noble Ambition* to recom-
mend themselves to the Affection and Applauses of that Com-
munity, which they have under their immediate Care and Pro-
tection; with what Zeal and Steadiness will they pursue those
Measures that promote the Interest of that Body, whereof they
are the Head ?”

Dedicated to the MOST HONOURABLE
The MARQUIS of ROCKINGHAM.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILKIE, at the Bible, in St. Paul's
Church-yard. 1765.

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SILK MANUFACTURE;

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TO THE
MOST HONOURABLE
THE
MARQUIS of ROCKINGHAM,
First Lord Commissioner of the TREASURY,
&c. &c.

MY LORD,

A T a time so extremely critical as the present is universally known to be, both to the political and commercial affairs of this nation; while we are *apparently* at peace with all the world abroad, and as it were, at war within ourselves, by the contention of two powerful PARTIES, the one headed by the *Favorite* of the Crown, and the other by the *Favorite* and *Idol* of the People; and while the GREAT make *equal* parade of their patriot principles, but *few* have virtue enough to put them into practice; though they cannot but know, from the voice of the public, that we stand in the greatest need of such *virtuous* actions. At a time so critical as this, my Lord, how happy must this nation be, to see your Lordship placed at the head of our most important concerns that have lately been so strangely neglected!

AN EVENT so very interesting to these kingdoms, cannot but fill every *British* heart with unspeakable Joy; since we have, my Lord, the greatest reason to expect, that the many noble qualities that have hitherto rendered your character

racter truly amiable, and made your name dear to your country, will influence your future conduct; and powerfully prompt you to preserve *entire* that heart-felt satisfaction of being the object of your country's LOVE and ADMIRATION. This, my Lord, will be the certain consequence of a *due* exertion of the great authority vested in your Lordship.—The great confidence that both PRINCE and PEOPLE have in your principles and ability, justly induces us ALL to hope that your Lordship will, at this very important juncture, have a careful EYE over every thing that is interesting to the nation; either political or commercial: that in respect to the *former*, we may be guarded against the designs of our attentive RIVALS (which will not fail to break out with rapidity when *they* are ripe for execution;) and with regard to the *latter*, that every branch of trade may be *duely* encouraged, to enable us to support ourselves against any difficulties the occasions may require; without which, our care would be in vain: it being evident, that every advantage, and even our *Safety* itself, must come from our manufactures and commerce. This, my Lord, is an undeniable truth; therefore it must be obvious to every common understanding, that it behoves our Ministers to give *due* and *immediate* attention to the interests of the trading and manufacturing part of the nation. Delays are dangerous, when things are precarious. And as the strength of our great RIVAL and natural ENEMY encreases daily by the revival of her trade and her powerful connections, we must expect, my Lord, one day or other (and we do not know how soon it may happen) to feel the weight of their united powers. For which reason it is very affecting, and affords a melancholy prospect to see our own affairs in a declining state. How great would

would be the shame, if after gathering so many laurels, we should *ever* be forced to resign them? And this, alas! might be our fate, should they break with us when we are unprepared; which would be so much for their interest, and so suited to their national *perfidy*, that we may be sure, my Lord, they will be always attentive to every method that can lull us into a sleep of security for that purpose.

BUT great as is the necessity of this attention to our commercial interest, yet, my Lord, it is not the *first* thing that should be undertaken. One *previous* step is absolutely necessary; for our present situation requires, in the very *first* place, a good understanding among ourselves. This, my Lord, is so essential a foundation for our actions, that it cannot be denied to command a *prior* right to our attention. Which induces me to hope, for the sake of my country, that every one, who sincerely wishes success to these kingdoms, will join their endeavors to restore harmony at home, by a *Coalition of Parties*: for it is evidently impossible to do any thing that is interesting to the public without it, as every blessing must flow from UNION at home. While we remain an united people, we have nothing to fear; because every individual is then ready to join in support of the whole. But, on the contrary, we have every thing to dread, while *intestine discord, disunion, and party-rage* keep us inactive, and inattentive to our general welfare. It is manifest, my Lord, that so long as we are divided in sentiments at home, we cannot be united in our endeavors to maintain our honor, and a due esteem abroad; or to promote the great spring and cause of it, the welfare of the public, by an encouragement of manufactures

and commerce, so essentially necessary to our well doing, in particular, as a trading and manufacturing nation.

IN such a situation of country, and form of government as ours, you must be very sensible, my Lord, that there is nothing that can so soon destroy our felicity and our consequence (for the one must necessarily produce the other) as a disagreement among ourselves. Whence it is manifest that a *Coalition of Parties*, must, of consequence, be of the *first* importance to a nation surrounded with jealous eyes, and by powerful and numerous RIVALS!

WE boast, my Lord, of the *Ballance* of that power abroad which often does not concern us; and now neglect an *equilibrium* at home; though every advantage that we can wish for must, as I have said, *first* flow from a good understanding among ourselves.

WE are told, in sacred writ, "That an house that is divided against itself shall fall." That may be our fate, if we do not agree and join our endeavours for a *timely* care of the whole community; in which we are ALL concerned as members.

THE task, my Lord, is *great* and *glorious*: for what can be more *so* than to procure the inward peace of a whole nation that is torn by PARTY, and its interests thereby greatly neglected?

To remove *discord* and general *inquietude*, and to establish in their places *concord* and *tranquility*, is worthy of the most noble character. Such a friend to the community *truly* deserves the glorious name of PATRIOT; which is at this time so much talked of, but so *little* exemplified.

THIS glory, my Lord, which other great men for want (as I suppose) of the necessary qualifications,

cations, for that great, that arduous task, have not compassed, was reserved for your Lordship; whose good sense, and universal benevolence, joined to a thorough conviction of the *fatal tendency* of such contentions at home will, it is hoped, try to compass it, to the satisfaction of the whole nation.

WHATEVER esteem may be due to some men more than to others for the *fruit* of their past conduct, ALL are intitled to our good will : and, I believe, there is no person who looks ever so little forward into *future effects from present causes*, but must, from his heart, wish a *Coalition* may speedily be brought about.

BUT though I imagine every thinking man who truly loves this state, must breathe so salutary a wish, yet I apprehend, my Lord, that this desirable EVENT can never be compassed until both PARTIES, are willing to make some concessions for the sake of harmony and public tranquility. Every man who is *really* desirous to render his country happy, will readily assent to it; for none can *justly* be entitled to the glorious name of PATRIOT who shall suffer his private quarrels to hazard the welfare and safety of that community whereof he is a member. Which, it is manifest, must happen, if the nation is much longer tormented by *intestine Discord*, and weakened by a disunion of its most useful subjects. It being obvious to every man's sense of things, that while our attention is taken off from the great concerns of the state, they must, of consequence, be neglected and prejudiced.

OUR manufactures and commerce, the spring and support of ALL our actions, and of every thing we can boast of, must consequently be deserted; to the great encouragement of the enemies of our
happiness,

happinefs, who will not fail to avail themselves of our neglect. THOSE who are extremely artful, and renowned for the *intriguing* part of policy cannot, methinks, give greater proofs of Generalship in the art of politics, than by *enervating* the British nation by a contention among its own members; than which nothing can so effectually weaken us. They are so perfectly sensible of this great point of policy, that their *Emiffaries* have always aimed at securing the hireling writers of the times, to plant such doctrines in the mind of the public, as are best calculated to answer the purpose of their employers. Whence their favorite scheme has always been, and, we may reasonably suppose, will ever be, to sow the seeds of discord, so fatal to these kingdoms; and of consequence, so advantageous to our watchful RIVALS. For by lulling us into a state of lethargy, they are enabled to reinstate their flourishing condition, till they gather such strength as may greatly disconcert us *unprepared*. Let this great and interesting truth be remembered, and *then* it will manifestly appear, that the *first* step that ought to be taken to make our affairs flourish is to unite us at home, that ALL may act in concert for the general good, in which every one is concerned; and therefore ought, from a principle of self-love, to be united to preserve to themselves their existence and the enjoyment of it.

THIS, my Lord, is a succinct but true state of our case; which is bad enough already, and will, I fear, become worse, if *due care* is not taken to prevent it, and to reinstate things as they were, and as they ought to be, for our safety, our honour and our well doing; of which methinks, (and I believe I speak the sentiments of every impartial person) that there can be no doubt, during your Lordship's administration.

FOR

For some time our manufactures have been discouraged ; and our commerce neglected. We have remonstrated as became loyal and free people, but hitherto to no purpose : some particulars have, it is true, received PROMISES of a redress of grievances, but they have not been executed. What would be the end of these things were they to continue after this rate ? The reply is easy ; because it is obvious to every capacity that the consequence of such proceedings is RUIN.

How thankful then ought we to be to our most amiable and beneficent SOVEREIGN, for calling to the PREMIERSHIP a nobleman of such singular merits, that even envy itself approves of ; whose patriot principles fill us with hopes of a speedy reformation of conduct !

WE are, my Lord, intitled to hope, that those great qualities which were so justly admired in your private life, will shine with a proportionable LUSTRE in a public character. To be the SAVIOR (*Cbi restora salva*) to be, I say, the SAVIOR of your country, at a time when she stands in so much need of your talents, is true glory ; and the greatest that a mind truly noble can be sensible of in this state of existence. Your Lordship has, from very early days, had an insatiable *thirst* after true glory ; an opportunity now offers to satiate that godlike passion : for our present unsettled state of affairs furnishes a *noble field* to exercise the greatness of your mind and abilities. Many very interesting things stand in need of *immediate* attention. As one, I beg leave to mention the SILK MANUFACTURE ; which, I hope, will appear to be deserving of your particular care : in which case, I most humbly recommend it to your Lordship's patronage, that the PROMISES which the *distressed* Weavers have received may be executed.

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**THAT his MAJESTY may long be blessed with
such a faithful MINISTER ; and the nation with
such a noble and worthy PATRIOT, is the humble,
sincere, and hearty prayer of,**

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble and

Most obedient servant,

**LONDON,
Aug. 1, 1765.**

A CITIZEN.



THOUGHTS

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THE Author of a Pamphlet lately published, intituled, *Considerations relative to a Bill for taking off the Duty on raw Silk*. Wilkie. founds his Argument upon two Principles, which I shall make the basis of my present Discourse: namely, 1st, That nothing is more conducive to the private and public opulence of this nation, than to encourage trade in all its various branches, particularly the valuable manufactures, such as that of Silk, which is the richest, and may be made the most extensive, and of more importance to the nation, than her other manufactures. 2dly, That raw materials should be imported *free of duties*, and as cheap to the manufacturer as possible, in order to encourage the manufacture. For, as he justly observes, the cheapness of the materials is the principal means of manufacturing cheap, and of being able to dispose of the commodity to those who trade with us upon as reasonable terms as our Rivals, the French and Italians. We ought
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to advert the more to this *essential point* of procuring the materials cheap, because we labour under the disadvantage of living at a greater expence for nourishment than the aforesaid two nations; who, from their climates and constitutions, can easily dispense with many things which are absolutely necessary to nourish our laboring people, and to which they are so habituated by custom, that they cannot conveniently or possibly dispense with them.

I SHALL leave the merits of the aforesaid Pamphlet concerning the necessity for taking off *all the duty* on raw Silk to the perusal of those it may concern, and only observe, by way of giving my opinion of that little Pamphlet, that though our author speaks in general of the Silk business, without descending to particulars, I agree with him, that it would *conduce* very much to the advancement of the Silk manufacture, and consequently to the benefit of this nation, if the duty on raw Silk was *entirely* taken off; as it will plainly appear by what he has said upon the subject, and by what I shall have occasion to mention.

BUT as my Argument in favor of a rich manufacture will prove how useful it is to the state, that is, how much it encreases the wealth of the inhabitants and of the state, and consequently how much it increases the strength of the *latter*, and the safety of the *former*, I shall first observe how others have advanced, that our great national wealth is, with respect to our foreign trade, a disadvantage to the state, because, *they say*, by making labor dearer here than in other countries, our Rivals undersell us in such manufactures, as they and we send to the same market. I grant there is some truth in this doctrine, but even allowing national wealth to be the cause of the increase of labor

labor (which I shall by and by endeavour to confute, so far as it concerns the Silk manufacture) it can only be right with regard to some manufactures, nor even with respect to them, if we make the commodity better in due proportion to the difference of the price of labor, which I believe is the case with regard to Cloth and Silk.

BUT supposing that Our Rivals have some advantage over us in the sale of the manufacture, *occasioned by the difference in the price of labor*, it is only confined to some particular branch of our trade (for which a remedy may be found in time) and does not extend itself in its consequences so far, as to make our great national wealth a disadvantage to the state; but on the contrary, considered in a general light, (as it certainly ought to be) I think the opulence of a nation, (which consists in the wealth of the trading and manufacturing inhabitants) is the very nerves, prop, support, strength, defence, and (if I may be allowed the expression) the very soul of the state.

THUS, in my opinion, national advantage (considered in a general light) is in proportion to national wealth; for though the necessities and conveniencies of life are not cheap in proportion to the wealth of the nation, but the contrary; and altho' plenty of money raises the price of every commodity, and consequently of labor, yet it still appears to me, that the advantages of a state is in proportion to her wealth; for it signifies little whether provisions are *dear* or *cheap*, nor indeed can we rightly distinguish them to be dear, if our wealth is in proportion capable of paying for it; and there is no doubt but the richer a nation is, I mean, the more capable the inhabitants are of paying abundantly for every thing, the greater encouragement is given to industry of every kind;

and the greater consumption of every thing is made ; for in proportion to peoples abilities for buying must be the consumption of things, and consequently the encouragement given to agriculture, to manufacturies, to trade, and to navigation, from whence will proceed the wealth of particulars, who will make an opulent government capable of living with splendor and honour, and of guarding against the jealousies of Rivals, which an indigent nation, or even one in a state of mediocrity, is less capable of doing.

THIS, methinks, concisely and sufficiently proves, that private benefit is public good, and that national advantage (in every sense of the word) is in proportion to national wealth.

IT is true, we have no *nursery for sailors*, but the navigation of our imports and exports ; and it is equally true, that in proportion as we stand in *less need* of articles from abroad, by manufacturing them at home, we shall employ *fewer hands and less shipping* for importation. But, at the same time we consider how much this circumstance decreases the navigation for the articles manufactured at home, it should be remembered, that the disadvantage resultory to the nation, by the smaller employment of our navigation, is over-balanced by the more considerable advantages which, must be the consequence of employing thousands of industrious people at home, and by bringing to perfection a manufacture, which (when in a state of perfection) may not only rival, but even *out-do* our competitors, and so gain the preference of sale, whereby this nation cannot fail of reaping the greatest advantages, by vending the commodity manufactured, and by employing the same or a greater quantity of *shipping and hands* for the exportation, than before such a state of perfection
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she did employ for the importation of the same commodity.

ALTHOUGH I have advanced, that it does not signify whether provisions be dear or cheap, *if our wealth is in due proportion*, yet, as the more we pay for the necessaries and conveniencies of life the higher the price of labour will be, and consequently dearer the thing manufactured *for exportation*, which is a considerable disadvantage to us, by our Rivals being capable of underselling us. I say, though this is a truth which must be acknowledged, yet I see this circumstance of the increase of labour in a different light to what it has been comprehended or represented by others. I mean, though wealth in some shape, may be the means of raising the price of a commodity, it does not appear to me, that national wealth, with regard to our foreign commerce, is a disadvantage to the state in general, nor even in the case before us of the Silk manufacture; because, the great wealth of the nation would not encrease the price of labour of the said manufacture, *if it was properly conducted*.

EVERY person of experience must know, that the labour of our manufactures in general is dearer than in other countries, especially France, and that it is a disadvantage to our manufactures *exported*, unless the difference of the price of labour, between this and Rival countries, be balanced by an adequate degree of superiority in the commodity manufactured, and *even then* it is a disadvantage to us; as many buyers are not proper judges of the *difference* of goodness in the manufacture. For example, the French cloth is greatly inferior to that of the English, for real goodness, that is, for *substance* and *service*; but French cloth *looks well to the eye*, and the difference

ference of quality cannot be distinguished by many, who, for want of a proper judgment, give the preference to the manufacture of France, because the French undersell us. The same observation may be made with regard to our Silks. The difference in the price of labour, and better materials, are the *only causes* that we come to market to a disadvantage. But, though the difference of the price of labour is a great article towards the increase of price of the manufacture, that increase is not owing to the wealth of the nation, which is supposed to make labour dear, but to other causes. The Silk manufacture (for example) pays the many labourers depending thereon a considerable deal more than should be paid for labour, to make our manufactured Silk have the preference in sale of those made in France and Italy, not on account of the nation's wealth, but because the English manufactory is *established in the metropolis*, where every thing (on account of the great number of inhabitants) is ever extremely dear. Had the manufactory of Silk been established in the most suitable part of the country, where the necessaries of life, and the conveniencies for the manufactory are cheap, it is plain the consequences would have been these. It would have made a considerable difference in the price of labour, and consequently would have reduced the price of the manufactured Silk in England more in proportion to what the French and Italians can afford to sell theirs for. This, with a superiority in the quality, would no doubt have given our manufacture the preference of sale.

THUS, I have endeavoured to demonstrate, that our great national wealth is not a disadvantage to the state, with respect to our foreign trade (for what is proved of the manufacture of Silk may be said of other things) but that, in general, it is attended

tended with the most happy consequences to the nation, where I shall leave it, and return to my subject of shewing the utility to this nation of the Silk manufacture, which employs so many THOUSANDS of his Majesty's subjects, and pays a considerable annuity to the state, as it must clearly appear by the nation's paying about one million and a half sterling for the Silk, which is the material of the manufacture, to Italy and to Spain, besides what is paid to China and Turkey.

To represent in a strong light the vast utility of the Silk manufacture and branch of this nation's trade, it is necessary to inform the public of the progress of Silk in England, from the time it is imported from Italy, Spain, Turkey, the East Indies, &c. to the time it has gone through the weaver's hands, and prepared for the mercer to dispose of for apparel; for, by mentioning the various branches which belong to and depend upon that very valuable manufacture, and the many THOUSANDS who are thereby employed either directly or indirectly, with the dependence or connection which all other branches of trade, in some shape or other, have thereon, it must, I think, strike the public in such light as to convince every one, that the Silk manufactory (which is a general term to comprehend all the particular branches relative to, or which have any connection with, the manufacturing of Silk) is of the very utmost consequence to this trading and manufacturing nation.

NOTHING can more effectually bring the price of raw Silk (which is the principal material) within due proportion, and the Silk manufacture upon an encouraging footing, than to let raw Silk come into these kingdoms *free of duties*; and indeed I am surprized that our legislators should obstruct the success of the Silk manufactory, of such infinite

finite consequence ! by laying a duty on the most valuable and principal material of it ; for it appears to me to be a mistaken policy, and a very near-sighted one too, to lay a duty to raise (for example) an annuity of twenty thousand pounds, and thereby shut the door to an income both private and public of *immense* more value, as would absolutely be the case, was raw Silk to come in *free of all duties*. But, as methinks enough has been said about that duty, so I shall leave that subject, and hope it will be *further considered*, for though a new regulation has been made since the publication of the aforesaid Pamphlet, to take nine pence per great pound wt. off the duty on raw Silk, and in room thereof to lay an additional six-pence per small pound on thrown Silk, I have some hopes, that after *further consideration*, the reasons for importing raw Silk *free of duty* will appear so clear, that the request will be granted in the fullest extent, by taking off the *whole duty* of near two shillings in the great hundred, and to lay another six-pence on thrown Silk, which would be a full compensation for the duty on raw Silk, and would make about three shillings in the pound in favour of the throwster's trade in England, a very desirable event, which would be great encouragement to that important branch.

Thus much I mention, of what has, in my opinion, been justly observed by another writer about raw Silk, because it leads me to my purpose, of considering the Silk trade from the time of the Silk's coming into these kingdoms raw.

In proportion to the quantity consumed or required by the manufactory, the merchant is encouraged to import raw Silk from Italy, Spain, Turkey, the East Indies, &c. of different qualities to serve for different purposes. The merchant

chant sells it to the silkmen, and they employ the throwster's trade, a branch of great consequence to this nation! as it employs many thousands for the several preparations which Silks undergo, to fit them to be used in the manufacture of silken stuffs, which are reeling, spinning, milling, bleaching, dyeing, and carding. When the throwster has thus prepared the Silk, it passes into the hands of the weavers, to whose branch belongs the whistlers, the warpers, the turners-on, the quillers, the draw-boys, the dressers, the pressers, the loom-makers, the harness-makers, the enterers, the mail-makers, the turners, the reed-makers, the pattern-drawers, the pattern-makers, &c. All these and several other branches belong to the Silk manufactory, which in Spittlefields, and other parts of London, Derby, Coventry, Norwich, Manchester, Ireland, &c. employ a great many thousands of people, who with their wives, children, and apprentices are so numerous, that I do not know how to number them, who have all their constant subsistence from the Silk manufactory, and *in various manners expend their substance amongst the other trades of these kingdoms*; so that, either directly, or indirectly, it may be said with propriety, that almost every individual has some dependence on, or connection with the Silk manufactory of Great Britain and Ireland. And therefore, if so many thousands are employed for private and for public good (for whatever is of private must be of public benefit, as in proportion to the success of particulars, they will be enabled to contribute to the necessities of the state;) I say, if so many thousands are employed to the advantage of the nation, is it not great pity, that the manufactures of France, and of other countries, should be worn in England to

the prejudice of our own? which is capable, on due encouragement, of employing so many thousands of his Majesty's loyal and industrious subjects, and which brings so much advantage to particulars, so much emolument and assistance to the state? And is it not pity, that the GREAT (who ought to set good examples to the rest of the nation, with regard to conduct in this and other matters which so nearly concern the public welfare.) Is it not great pity, I say, they should be so fond of French Silks, French milliners, taylors, haberdashers, cooks, French valets de chambre, and French fashions of various sorts, to the distress of the inhabitants of this nation?

To what can we attribute such a dislike of every thing that is British, and such a passion for things foreign, especially from France, that this nation has, at the example of the Great? Surely, to a depravity of taste, or corruption of it, for like the dog in the fable, they leave the substance for the shadow; it being an undeniable truth, that the manufactory of England is capable of manufacturing any sort of Silk, to any value, in a more masterly manner and cheaper, *in proportion to real goodness and beauty*, than the French, or any other nation, are capable of doing; and, if that is the case (as I make no doubt it will appear so) is not the preference, so shamefully given to French manufactures, and to French fashions, owing entirely to a *corruption of taste*? which the second class imitates of their superiors, and hands down to their inferiors, and thereby encourage the importation of French manufactures, and employ French taylors, hair-dressers, milliners, cooks, valets de chambre, and others, while our own industrious and deserving poor part of the nation, who do their utmost endeavours to thrive, for the support

support of their numerous families *starve*, and are reduced to a state of *desperation*, for the want of that employment which is given to the subjects of our greatest Rival, our most jealous and dangerous neighbour.

ARE not our beaux, our belles, our monkies, our three parts of four, French English men and women ashamed of this truth?

To shew the folly of this nation in 1765, be it remembered, that our n——y and g——y for *true* taste, our hair-dressers, our taylors, our milliners, our w—res for fashions, take their trips to France, our affectionate good friend, our sincere and faithful neighbour, and she, who loves her neighbour as herself, very good-naturedly suffers these refiners of our taste to *carry home* with them her valuable Silk manufactures, her fashions, millinery, ornaments for the outside, but none for the inside of the head (the greatest ornament of human nature) which the French judiciously keep for themselves: these they suffer to be bought of them upon *reasonable* terms.

THIS is a true picture of the present times, and if a stop is not timely put to the prevailing fashion of neglecting our business and real happiness to promote that of our good neighbours; this *madness* (for I cannot call it any thing else with so much propriety) may get to such a head, as to introduce the French tongue as our common and natural language; and indeed, after what I have said about the passion for French folly, I should not be surprized, were I to be arrogantly asked the reason of my presuming to speak English in London instead of French. This may be laughed at by some people, but I know it will have due weight with others, who are more serious, and who consider the ill tendency of encouraging any

thing from France, especially fashions, as by indulging one thing, particularly one so universal, they may insensibly gain upon us, until they have taken such root in our mind, and have such prevalence over our inclinations, as shall not be easily removed when the ill consequence is dreaded.

Methinks such part of the nation of both sexes, who have no right to be tripping to France, might be cured of their foolish passion by a penalty on every one of them to such an amount, as shall be judged proper on their setting out for France, and another on their return home. This method, I am apt to think, would soon cure that inconsiderate part both of men and women, and keep them at home with their families, many of whom, in their absence, are put to great inconveniencies by their professions being *neglected*, and by their substance being *squandered away* in France, for French fopperies, or for worse purposes.

Thus, our generous country labours to enrich the French, and to compleat themselves for men of importance; for dancing-masters, pimps, for nice powdered effeminate French English gentlemen, to their great shame, and to the no small emolument and amusement of our neighbours, who are very assiduous in cultivating this passion of the English for their *follies*, and at laughing at them for being such *asses*.

CAN there be a greater satire upon the understanding of the English, than to be capable of such follies? And instead of this truth, would it not be more becoming the dignity of mind and character of an Englishman, and more conducive to his happiness, to despise the fashions which are so passionately sought from France, that corrupt one half the nation?

No

No body will dispute the necessity there is for our youth of quality, and some others of fortune, to travel for to acquire a knowledge of the manners and languages of other countries, for their own improvement, and for their country's instruction and good.

BUT how many are they who travel for this good purpose ? And how can they expect to reap advantages of this sort, while, instead of being accompanied in their travels by men of letters, and of manly conduct, who know how to judge of things for their improvement, they are attended by pimps and sycophants, who have no knowledge but the *art of flattery*, nor no purpose to serve, but to accumulate riches for themselves. These gentlemen are generally French, Italians, and other foreigners ; for an Englishman, tho' master of the most useful languages, tho' by residence perfectly acquainted with the manners and language of those countries ; tho' a man in all respects qualified, is not to be allowed any share of merit, when compared with that mistaken politeness, to that servile and unmanly flattery and effrontery of the French, &c. who have the art to *force* themselves into the confidence of the English of both sexes.

THE FAIR without these men of parts would be undone ; they would grieve and pine, they would fret their guts to fiddle-strings, because, without these effeminate men, they could not get rid of their English modesty, so becoming to their *faces*, but still so troublesome to their *inclinations* ; without these obliging creatures they would not have a sufficient share of coquetry or effrontery, that is absolutely requisite to compleat them for wh——s.

WITH this Picture of the Times, why do we wonder, that the more useful part of the nation,
with

with their numerous families are starving? While French fashions prevail; while French hair-dressers, tailors, dancing-masters, milliners, cooks, pimps, and valets de chambre, by the ruin of these useful and deserving people, and at the expence of the whole nation, in a short time return to their countries with riches, and to make the laugh still the greater against this nation, they do not fail to keep us *plentifully* supplied with others in their room.

BUT let us have charity towards all men, and women too (for I don't see why they should be excluded from a common benefit) let us, I say, place the *saddle* upon the *right horse*, and lay the blame of this *evil* to its real *cause*, not to the French and other foreigners, who certainly are to be commended and not blamed, for endeavouring to improve their fortunes, an event desirable to all mankind, and consequently natural to them all. The fault is our own, I mean of our representatives, for suffering them to build their fortunes upon the ruin of ours. But, as we cannot reasonably expect a man will turn evidence against himself, so neither can we expect (without great alteration indeed) to find *redress* from the *cause* itself of the *evil* complained of. If by this I am not sufficiently understood, I mean, that until our *chiefs* discountenance the importation of French manufactures, and make use of none but our *own manufactures* and our *own people*, it will be in vain to remonstrate against the great and shameful grievance, so loudly and so justly complained of by the weavers, and the rest of the Silk manufactory, for their own sake, directly, and indirectly, for the sake of those who are connected with them for the continual necessities of life; who are so numerous, that in one shape or other, I may say, with

with propriety, it comprehends the greatest part of the nation; for if we consider the chain of things, or the connection and relation which one has to the other, by the employment and subsistence in various manners of so many thousands, we may argue from the weaver *ad infinitum*, without losing sight of the Silk manufactory. *Such* is the importance at home of that branch to this trading and manufacturing nation, and therefore such a manufacture, as that of Silk, *duely* protected and encouraged, cannot fail of producing the most happy consequences, by enriching particulars, who will be enabled to contribute to the continual and occasional wants of a state, which has *often* found the *comfort* of having opulent inhabitants. But, if grievances go *unredressed*, if methods are used to *distress* them, and keep any part of them poor (particularly the industrious) how can the nation expect to be *duely* assisted in pecuniary matters in times of great necessity, of which there are *too many*; and how is she to discharge the great load of debt, which is now owing, if the subject is obstructed in his profession, by the encroachments of our Rivals?

FOR my part, I think every true Briton has a right to set a mark of contempt upon those who have so little regard to their country's welfare, as to wear French commodities; for it is the interest of the *whole* nation to encourage, by every possible *prudent* method, our own manufactures. But how are they to be sufficiently encouraged, while the fashionable part of the nation gives the preference to the manufacturies of France and Italy?

I HAVE mentioned, that this partiality to the French Silks is not owing to superior merit; but on the contrary, that our manufacture has the advantage in regard to *real* goodness and beauty
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of the Silk manufactured, so that the preference given to foreign Silks, must be owing either to good nature, or to the folly of this nation, in doing good to our neighbours to our own destruction. I say to our own ruin, because, if a timely stop is not put to this practice, they may also aim at distressing us in other manufacturies or branches of our trade, and so gain such an *influence over us*, as may be attended with such fatal consequences that I do not care to mention.

I HAVE shewn, that the people belonging to the Silk manufacture, and who are more publickly known by the name of weavers, are a very numerous body of people; and I will venture to say, they are as industrious and as loyal in all respects, as any of his Majesty's subjects, from the *peer* to the *peasant*. People who ask nothing more than the *bare* necessities of life for their continual labour; who desire nothing more sincerely and passionately, than to give every proof, required of good subjects, of their duty to their Sovereign, their obedience to the laws, their submission to superiors, and their respect and well wishes for all mankind. But, the encroachment of the French upon their property, I mean, upon the British Silk manufacture, with other *evils*, are the *cause* of their being at present much dissatisfied with their *wretched situation*; and therefore humbly, but not seditiously, implore the protection of *their benevolent King, our common patron and father*.

THIS is the case of the weavers; and can any person, in his senses, blame so numerous a body of people, and so valuable a part of the public (the greatest part married and loaded with children) for endeavouring to procure bread, and other absolute necessities of life, for their *starving families*

lies, that are really in the greatest distress for want of Employment? If nature operates and exerts herself with *them* (of which there can be no doubt) they are naturally influenced, and necessarily determined to support and preserve their existence.

As this is an affair of great importance to the nation, instead of exclaiming against the conduct of the peaceable and loyal Silk people, the public should, me thinks, make a point of removing the *evils*, which are the *cause* of their dissatisfaction and complaint.

THE public is greatly interested in their success, first, for the sake of *public tranquillity*, and next, because it is self-evident, that the more these numerous people thrive, the more riches and power they acquire for the nation; which is a reason and a truth so clear, that for my part I am amazed, this state is not sensible of the good policy there is in giving *due protection* to the Silk manufacture of these kingdoms.

AFTER saying so much of an *evil* so loudly complained of, it will, no doubt, be expected, that I shall shew the *real causes*, and point out an *effectual remedy* to remove them, which I shall now endeavour to do, and I hope it will be to the satisfaction of every well wisher to the manufactures and trade of this nation.

By what I have already said about French Silks and French fashions, I dare say the public imagines them to be *one cause* of the weavers complaint, wherein they are right. For, the foreign manufactures, those of France in particular, which are imported and sold in these kingdoms, especially in and about this metropolis, *where our own manufacture is established*, is the first and principal *cause* of the weavers distress and complaint; and as it has been mentioned, and can be proved to

be true, that the French manufacture is not superior to the British Silks, either with regard to substance, real goodness, or beauty; it is very natural and just, that this very numerous and useful body of loyal people should complain of the importation of foreign Silks under the *very nose* of our own manufactory, and in spite of our efforts to bring to perfection so valuable a branch of this nation's business.

I AM sorry that those who have the conduct of the public welfare discover so *little knowledge* of trade and manufactures, or else so *little regard* to their country's good, as to suffer the importation of a rich commodity *universally consumed*, which we manufacture ourselves in greater perfection. For my part, I am more apt to think it proceeds from the *heart* than the *head*, because, it must be clear to every one, that it is a very great inconsistency, as well as wretched policy, to suffer French and Italian manufactured Silks to be imported, while we have a manufactory of our own really capable of supplying us with as good if not better Silks. But even allowing, for the sake of argument, that the French excel us (which by the bye is not true) we should encourage our own manufactures, that employ so many thousands of his Majesty's good subjects, who contribute their shares to the necessities and support of the state.

IF manufactured Silks from France and Italy are suffered to be imported, we may with *equal propriety* take a distaste to our own corn, and import it from abroad; our gentlemen and ladies who have a foreign *taste*, may possibly have a greater gust and *relish* for bread made from corn of the growth of Barbary.

I KNEW a Venetian lady of quality, who was used to give an annual invitation to a gentleman
in

in Sweden, to come over to get children by her ; but, what is most extraordinary, it was with the consent of her lord. I hope our taste will not be *so much* refined, tho' I shall not wonder at any thing, so long as French fashions prevail, so long as French manufactures are suffered to ruin ours, so long as *merciers* and other people, either legally or *clandestinely*, import and vend foreign manufactured Silks.

THESE gentry, I apprehend, will be displeased with me, for saying so much truth of the weavers ; but, little do I value any selfish narrow-minded tribe, whose *only care* is to accumulate riches for themselves, without having *a due consideration* and *tenderness* for the rest of their countrymen ; and I shall venture publickly to declare, that those who import, vend, or wear foreign manufactured Silks, to the prejudice, or ruin of our own manufacture, are very unworthy members of this nation, and as such practices have a very ill-tendency, they should be timely prevented.

As our manufactory can supply these people with the very *same variety* as they receive from abroad, is it not sufficient for *them* to get an honest and reasonable profit by the Silk manufactured in Great Britain ?

THIS they would do, if their *moderate* expectations could be brought to be satisfied with the *adequate* profits of so *laborious* a profession, both of hands and head, as the *merciers* trade. But these *nice* gentlemen know better things ; they are fond of making *hasty* fortunes by selling French Silks, whereby they have it in their power to charge our frenchified gentlemen and ladies whatever they please.

Now, for this great *evil*, let us think of a *remedy*. In my opinion, there is only *one* that can most effectually remove it ; and that is to lay such

a duty on French and all other foreign manufactured Silks imported into these kingdoms (except such as come from places belonging to the crown of Great Britain) as shall amount to a prohibition; by which method there would remain no fear of any being brought in lawfully. And to prevent the *clandestine* importation, *which is now practised with great success*, let it be seizable when and wherever found, even if worn, and the persons harbouring the same to pay a certain sum of money, and rendered contemptible for being such enemies to the welfare of their country. I am aware of the inconveniencies that would attend the making of foreign Silks seizable, and subject to a penalty *wherever found*, especially when worn; but nevertheless, methinks it would answer the purpose; for by people's dreading the consequences (the *Fair* in particular) they would be deterred from such practices; and there is no doubt, would consume none but *our own* manufacture, which, in the course of a little time, would become so habitual to them, that there would not remain even a *thought* after foreign manufactured Silks, to the great joy and relief of our weavers, and I will venture to say, to the entire satisfaction of the whole nation. This method would answer the purpose better than addressing the ladies in the public papers; for though the good Intention of such writers might have some effect upon the minds of *a few* of the Fair sex, it would, I am apt to think, be only for a *little while*; for they are too *fickle* and undetermined, especially about things that please the eye, to belong depended upon; but if we were to suppose, that these *few* could ever after be relied upon, I imagine, it would never have so universal an influence over the ladies as could be wished; and therefore rather than wait for such an *uncertain event*, it would be better

to lay them under the necessity of doing what perhaps their inclinations would be averse to. This, or something similar, I apprehend, would most effectually remove this great and shameful evil, so justly complained of by the weavers; and as it hurts considerably the subject, and decreases his Majesty's revenue, I hope a stop will be put to this unfair trade very soon.

I HAVE heard some people say, that the prohibition of French manufactured Silk cannot be done consistent with our treaty with France; but I cannot believe any agreement is made with our good neighbours to *consume their Silks and neglect our own*, as that would indeed be a most *shameful* convention. Nor do I think *they* would require it, as it would be so *barefaced* a request. And I have so good an opinion of the understanding of the French to think, that if any *mercier*, or other person of Paris, was to *sell or wear* English manufactures, in preference to French, he would be looked upon as an enemy to his country, and treated with the contempt due to such an unworthy member of the State. Let us therefore, at their example, do the same, and show the same love for the success of our manufactures, and for the welfare of our country, as they judiciously do for theirs, otherwise our good sense and prudence, as well as our attachment to our King and country, will be called in question.

WHAT does it signify going to war, or what purpose does it answer to be successful, if *after all* we neglect our interest and more immediate happiness at home, and thereby give strength to our competitors to beat us in their turn, and with *our own weapons* too?

THOUGH, I think, nothing can justify the *merciers*, or any other set of people, for selling French
and

and Italian Silks while they can have such *great choice* of our own; yet it might be said, that they have an equal right with the weavers, and with the rest of the nation, to exert themselves in pursuit of their advantages. Granted; for I do not see, what better title any man can possibly have to consult his happiness more than I have to promote mine. But *private* benefit ought to give place to *public* good. The interest of the *merciers* is the concern of an inconsiderable body compared with the weavers, throwsters, and the numerous branches of the Silk manufactory; and therefore I shall beg leave (and methinks I do it with great propriety) to call the one a *private*, the other a *public* affair, by which rule the unreasonable views of the *former* should give place to the welfare of the *latter*, who are a more numerous and a more useful part of the State.

THE next *cause* of the weavers distress, is the extraordinary price of *all kinds* of provisions. What a wretched situation must these poor industrious people be in, to want work, and to see provisions extravagantly dear? This is such a *picture of distress* to so many THOUSANDS, that must (methinks) greatly affect the rest of the nation, to whom I humbly recommend their case.

As this *great evil* is complained of by others as well as the weavers, let us enquire into the *cause* of provisions being so dear, and out of the *reach* of the industrious poor, and apply a remedy *in time* for their relief; for many of them who have large families to support are absolutely in a starving and desperate situation, and therefore stand in need of the *immediate* assistance of the legislature, as well as of the *benevolence* of the well-disposed. By well-disposed, I mean such as have a *real feeling* for the sufferings of their fellow

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low creatures, of whom *happily* there are many in this kingdom, as was lately found by the readiness with which they *profusedly* assisted the poor Palatines, with the collection of more than four thousand three hundred pounds; and, no doubt, from a more natural feeling and partiality for their own countrymen, they will be *equally ready* to relieve them by their *bounty*, and by their good offices, to reduce the price of provisions to a reasonable standard.

I HAVE heard it observed by foreigners, that the English are created with an inward turn of mind, that naturally determines them to feel for, and to assist the *distressed* in a much greater degree than any other nation, which, as it is greatly to their honour, I wish to be true. An opportunity is now offered to them to exert their native beneficence; the way is pointed out to do good to THOUSANDS. To a great and generous mind no reflection affords so much pleasure as the relieving of the *distressed*; who are at present in greater want than the greatest part of the journeymen weavers?

IN other countries, when there is an *apprehension* that corn will be dear on account of a scarcity, either from a failure of the crop, or by exporting it, care is taken in *due time* to prevent the bad consequence of such an event, by preventing the extraction. This should be particularly attended to in this *populous country*, where the dearness of corn produces the most alarming consequences. What I have said of the necessity of having the materials of a manufacture cheap, holds good with regard to provisions, for the cheaper the manufacturer is enabled to live, the cheaper he can afford to work, and consequently the thing manufactured is in due proportion cheap. By
which

which it will appear, that it deserves the particular attention of our magistrates to keep the provisions of a populous and manufacturing nation as cheap as possible, wherein they might easily succeed with a due exertion of proper measures, which I leave to their care.

THE dearth of corn, when it is not owing to the failure of the crop (which is seldom the case with us, or at least we happily have enough, thanks to Providence, for our home consumption) it is occasioned by one or more of the following causes.

THE cunning farmer, enriched with the success of many plentiful seasons, has made matters so convenient to him, that he keeps his *store* until he can sell it at an extravagant price. And this practice of the farmer or the forestaller, or both, makes people imagine that corn is really scarce, of which these *wolves* avail themselves, and get what price they please.

AT other times the exportation of corn, and the *consumption of the distiller*, are so great that, with the practices aforesaid, corn rises to an immoderate price, which is at present the case, to the great misfortune of thousands, particularly the poorest. To remedy this very *alarming evil*, and to give relief to the poorer part of the nation, who stand in so much need of it, we should follow the example of other wise States, and prohibit the exportation of corn in *due time*, that is, when the *price exceeds a certain reasonable standard*, and not neglect the doing of it until necessity forces us to such measures, as happens to be the case at present, by which other nations reap the advantages of our necessity for their growth and navigation; and *we* who seek relief by such a measure, receive but very little comfort from a
step

step taken so late; because let the grain we are supplied with be ever so cheap at the place of growth, the importers will insist upon a price not in proportion to the prime cost, but in proportion to our want of the commodity; so that we are supplied, it is true, but at such a price that the poorer part of the nation, for whose relief it is suffered to be imported, cannot afford to buy it, and consequently reap no benefit by it.

A STEP taken so late in the day could only have been of service in one manner, and that is, had proper agents abroad been *timely* employed to buy up a considerable quantity *cheap* for the account of our government, to be distributed at a moderate price, it would have relieved the poor at a small expence, for if the purchase had been made *prudently* the government would not have been much out of pocket by it; but supposing a few thousand pounds had been sunk, *that* could be no *object* to the nation, when considered with the *relief* given to thousands of industrious subjects that are *half-starved*. This is frequently done in Italy, and we have lately been told, that the measure was adopted by the king of Prussia; the reason our superiors did not think of it is to me inconceivable at this time of scarcity and dearth of corn, which gives the nation so much concern; and for which reason it is extremely unjust, as well as impolitic, to supply other nations with what our own people have occasion for, purely to give some profit to a few particular persons that export it, who seldom thrive; for according to the Italian saying to the medlers with corn, *Fromenti, tormenti*.

To pursue our good intentions in favour of the public, and to render *completely* effectual the ne-

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cessary measures to be taken, at the same time we *advert* to the necessity of preventing the exportation of corn, measures should also be taken to prevent the farmers and engrossers of *corn and meat* from raising the prices under various excuses and pretences.

THE dealers in corn, or the corn-jobbers, may keep their *store*, and pretend that the commodity is scarce; and the carcase-butchers, after engrossing as much as suits their purpose, may pretend, that the weather has either ruined their cattle, or destroyed their pasture; and all these reasons of the corn-dealers and butchers (though sometimes true) are generally false, and reasons only made use of to *impose* upon the Public. With these practices the butcher is grown so impudent, that he will have what price he pleases, and those who cannot afford to pay extravagantly are treated with disdain, and served scornfully and shamefully for their money. The poorer sort often experience this truth.

BUT as I wish for nothing more ardently than an exact and impartial administration of justice, so let me give to every one their due, and disburthen the farmer of part of the blame laid to his charge, which methinks more justly belongs to the *distiller*, whose trade is the most lucrative perhaps of any one in the kingdom, the truth of which must be manifest to every one; for where do we see a *distiller*, who does not, after a very short time, step into his coach, and live in affluence? What is it owing to? To their tricks with corn, and profits on the liquor they distil from it. What a shame it is, that they should make so great a quantity of gin, of no benefit to the nation, but on the contrary; and what great pity
it

it is, that these rich gentry are not taken to task ; their tricks, I will venture to say, are a grievance which calls loudly for redress — It is the distillers who combine or contrive to forestall corn ; first, to serve their purpose of making gin, and next to raise the price of wheat, which they monopolize and keep up as they please. Thus they have a double advantage, first, by the profits on the gin, and next by selling at Bear Key, such quantities of wheat as they have not occasion for, at an advanced price, by which management the *distillers* are considerable gainers at the no small expence of the Public, who, I hope, will find means to prevent such unfair practices.

To prevent these impositions, and to relieve the oppressed poor, the price of provisions should, from time to time, be *estimated* by the proper magistrates (of whom, thanks to Heaven, we have enough *in number*) and they, according to the real circumstances of the times and necessities of the Public, should fix certain equitable rates ; and methinks, it would not be a difficult matter to make the sellers of corn and meat, notwithstanding their imposing arguments, be satisfied with more reasonable prices than what are now paid for provisions. It is therefore hoped, that those whose province it is to regulate the price of provisions will do it most *effectually* and *soon*, otherwise I do not know what will become of our numerous poor, what will become of our manufactures, or what will be the consequence ?

I WILL here beg leave to transcribe the sentiments of another writer. “ There surely never
 “ was a time, says he, when a better opportunity
 “ of displaying *public spirit* could offer than the
 “ present ; and if the world is not strangely mi-
 “ staken in the characters of men, one would ima-

“ gine, that *abilities* are not wanting for the in-
 “ vention of ways and means to remedy an *evil*
 “ which every day encreases, to the *misery* of the
 “ inferior class of people. We live in a country
 “ *fertile by nature*, and improved to the highest
 “ degree by the arts of manure and cultivation;
 “ nor is there a *real* scarcity of any article among
 “ the necessaries of life. But the *avarice* and *vil-*
 “ *lainy* of tradesmen have contrived to make an
 “ *artificial* famine in this land of plenty. Provi-
 “ sions of all sorts are grown, by *their* manage-
 “ ment, so excessively dear, that a family of a *mo-*
 “ *derate income* can *hardly* live, and the poor
 “ must literally *starve*. Are the great guardians
 “ of our rights and liberties so inattentive, or so
 “ ignorant of our misfortunes, that they see not
 “ the *dearth* that is at hand? For my part, tho’
 “ I am as fond of *liberty* as they can be, I con-
 “ fess, I could wish they would *at present* trust it
 “ to its own natural spirit of self-preservation,
 “ and employ their *time* and *talents* in securing us
 “ the enjoyment of the necessaries of life at a *mo-*
 “ *derate* price. Great folks may have more re-
 “ fined notions, for aught I know, but my hum-
 “ ble opinion is, that EATING is as essen-
 “ tial to the body *corporate*, as LIBERTY is
 “ to the body *politic*, and full as natural to an
 “ *English* constitution. But in short, I believe
 “ verily, that as long as *they* can share the loaves
 “ and fishes among themselves, *they* are perfectly
 “ easy, and care not whether *we* pay *two* pence
 “ or *six* pence a pound for mutton. I was re-
 “ solved, however, to acquaint *them* with the *di-*
 “ *stresses of the poor*, and sincerely wish to see *them*
 “ vigorously pursue such measures, as may rescue
 “ us from the apprehensions of an *impending* fa-
 “ mine.”

THUS,

THUS, I hope, to have sufficiently shewn, that the weavers have *reason* to complain, and that their great distress proceeds from two *causes*, viz.

THE importation of foreign manufactured Silk, and the dearness of provisions. The one prevents their being *sufficiently* employed, the other prevents their being able to *make shift* with the little they do earn. These *causes* of necessity and of complaint being duly attended to and *timely* removed, will relieve their distress, and answer the good purposes of the nation. This done, I will venture to say, there will not be a more satisfied and obedient people than the weavers, and the rest of the Silk manufacture. They will chearfully attend to their respective occupations, and thereby establish tranquillity; they will promote their private welfare and the public good. Mean while, in justice to these people, I must observe, they *never have*, nor *never intended* to create the least disturbance. But, other disaffected and turbulent people, availing themselves of the appearance of discontent on the account of their numbers, were guilty of crimes, which the poor, but innocent weavers, have been charged with. And I should not be surprized, if the ———, and other evil-disposed persons, either through ill-will to our excellent government, or in hopes of making their fortunes by ——— should take such an opportunity to corrupt others, and disturb the public tranquillity, wherein we may, as usual, naturally apprehend — will have a hand.

As this, *might* be the case, (for 'tis prudent to suppose the worst in affairs of such vast concern to the nation) it is, methinks, highly necessary to guard against so alarming an affair, which, I fear, will not be put an end to, until *the bill passes in favour of the British Silk manufacture*, and until measures are taken to *reduce the price of provisions*,
that

that the numerous and distressed weavers, and the other poor, may have a reasonable and comfortable subsistence ; for the temper of the English is such, that they must be satisfied with the *reason* of things, and not by *force* ; their natural attachment and pursuit after *justice*, makes them set at *defiance* every *rigorous attempt* to deprive them of the use of their *reason*, and their *native right* of complaining whenever they are *aggrieved*.

I AM the more apprehensive, that the weavers will not be made *content*, until the aforesaid *measures* are taken for their *relief*, because their *miseries*, which are at present very great, are likely to be still greater, and that very soon ; as advices from abroad assure us, that the price of unwrought Silks (the material of the manufacture) at the places of growth, in Italy and Spain, will be *considerably* dearer than they were last year, owing to a very scanty *Racolta* ; which, there is no doubt, will occasion a *much smaller* quantity to be brought to England, the merchants being already afraid to import much of it, having to my knowledge suspended some of their *intended* orders, from the natural supposition, that the quantity required for the use of our manufacture must be *smaller*, under the discouraging circumstances of *dear* materials and little *vent*. The weavers not having encouragement to venture *much* at such high prices, at a time that they cannot find a proportionable *sale* for their manufactured goods, on account of the importation of foreign manufactures, which are preferred to theirs. This *smaller* importation, in the course of a year, of so rich a material, will *in more than one manner* considerably decrease his Majesty's revenue, and will necessarily employ *fewer* hands ; for our manufacture cannot afford to give *full* employ to the workmen, so long as unwrought
Silk

Silk is *dear*, and French Silks are *prefer'd* to our own, as well as those of Italy, which are equally destructive to the British manufacture, because the French bring their Silks here very frequently under the denomination of Italian filken goods. 'Tis obvious to every man's sense of things, that the employ must be in proportion to the quantity of Silk manufactured, and *that* will be in proportion to the *price* of the materials and the *sale* of the commodity, but more particularly the *latter*. Whence it would be *madness* in the weavers to stake their *fortunes* and their *time*, purely to give *full* employ to their workmen, when it is evident, the *risque* they would run amounts almost to a certainty of their ruin, and with them the loss of the manufacture to this nation. And if *that* should be *lost*, or even if it should only be at a *stand*, for a time, what would be the consequence? No less than inevitable and irreparable ruin to many thousands who have their *immediate*, and to as many more, who have a more *distant* subsistence from the manufacture of Silk; those numerous families, especially, who know of no other method to support their existence, must necessarily be plunged into desperation, and (for what will not such a situation drive a man to, that has a family to support?) thereby come to an *end*, that it grieves me to think any of my countrymen should be subject to.

I wish success to the British manufactures, and relief to the poor, and am the Public's most respectful servant.

A CITIZEN.

POST.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THAT it may not be thought I have some inducement for writing in favour of the weavers, I think it necessary to declare, I have no *other* than that of my country's welfare, which every friend to our happy constitution *ought* to have the most tender regard for, as being both their duty and their interest. I also declare I never had, nor do I know I ever shall have, any connection with the weavers, more than the rest of the public have; I mean, I have no private purpose to answer, nor any other view in writing, than to procure justice for my countrymen, as my conscience requires, and wherein, as my intentions are good, I hope not to incur the displeasure of the public; especially, as I have no doubt of making the truth of what I say appear, and I reckon that truth is obliged to that man, who maintains the argument he undertakes to demonstrate, by the best and strongest reasons that the nature of things can furnish him with. Hence it is, that tho' this discourse concerning the weaving business be true, yet for the full clearing of this matter, it will be but fair to consider what may be said on the *other side*; and the rather, because there are some objections that seem to be countenanced by *many*, which is enough to *overthrow* all that I have been saying: and the mentioning of these objections or suppositions will serve as a further proof of my candour. They are, I believe, pretty near as follows:

It may be *supposed* by some people, that the Silk manufacture of these kingdoms is already *sufficiently* encouraged, and that if *more* is done, it would be taking money out of our pockets to
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give to the weavers. For, as a proof of the success of the manufacture and of the weavers profits, the masters, say they, are grown as rich as Nabobs, for the truth of which, see their town and country houses; see how they live with the ease and convenience of a lord.

BUT softly good Sir. If some *few* have got easy fortunes, it is not in the degree here supposed; and if they have acquired some riches, it is no more than what the great industry and care of *many years*, both of themselves and predecessors, justly intitle them to. But people, for want of *due enquiry*, *judge hastily*, and are greatly mistaken with regard to the master weavers in general: they think, because some have saved money, that all have made great fortunes, whereas (and indeed I am sorry to say it) the case is very different with them *in general*.

THE enemies of the British manufactures may pretend what they please, but the impartial public has a right to the decision. The eyes of the public (tho' some members are either mistaken or corrupted) must see the state of things in an *impartial* light, and pass *sentence* accordingly in favour of the whole community, tho' it should displease some particular persons. It is from this confidence, that I am encouraged to deliver my sentiments concerning the weavers.

IF it is not exceedingly pleasant and diverting, it serves at least to entertain one, with all the emotions of pity, to hear some folks wonder how any body of people, however numerous and useful to the state, can presume to lay their complaints before their superiors; or how they can have the *face* to implore the protection of the legislature, whereto they are intitled in common with the rest of the nation, and which is every

Englishman's *birth-right*. To this supplication they are pleased to give the odious name of bullying a certain Right Honourable's house.

BUT how false is this accusation ! how wicked, and productive of direful consequences ! Let any judge of the frame of our happy constitution and lover of our native and precious liberty say. It is to such alone I appeal.

THANKS to heaven, we have a *patron and father for our King*, who, so far from being displeased with the proper exertion of our *native right* of remonstrating whenever we are aggrieved, hears with paternal attention our complaints, and relieves our distress as soon as it comes to the royal ear; of which, we humbly presume to hope, an instance will be given to the public, in the present case of the weavers ; whereat, every *true* friend of this country will heartily rejoice.

WE have good reason to expect this happy event, since *He* does in all instances express a *fatherly* concern for the welfare and happiness of *all* his subjects. And as that is universally known, can it be imagined, that those who *oppose* the designs of his goodness are agreeable to him ? No ; they cannot but *expose themselves* to his displeasure and aversion ; for there can be no series of their actions proportioned and adapted to his goodness, but such as promote the content and happiness of his people.

THUS, when they *neglect* the interests of their fellow subjects, or go about to *injure* them, for the one necessarily produces the other, in this they run directly cross to the intention of our gracious Sovereign, and cannot but be accounted oppressing his subjects, and counter-acting the designs of his goodness. This I would recommend to the serious attention of those, who, at their ease, complain

plain of the weavers, and I desire they will take this great truth along with them, that every man has implanted in his nature a principle of preservation, which necessarily prompts him to defend and preserve his existence. This is the law of nature and of reason, and I would fain know, what authority, agreeable to our happy constitution, ought to restrain *them* from the pursuit of an object, that is not only absolutely necessary to keep them alive, but also conducive to the public welfare?

WITH regard to the master weavers, let us, for the sake of argument, suppose them to be all rich. What then? Would that supposition (which is mere conjecture) be a reason that farther encouragement (if there be room, as there certainly is) should not be given to the Silk manufacture? No, surely. For it is undoubtedly an advantage to the State, that they, as well as all other subjects, be rich, especially if they become so by the profits of an opulose manufacture, that employs and maintains thousands of subjects useful to the nation in many respects.

BUT some people are apt to think, that the prohibition of foreign manufactured Silks can answer no other purpose than to enrich the master weavers; and therefore it would be taking money out of our pocket to give to them; because, say they, if the bill passes in favour of the weavers, the masters *alone* will reap the benefit of it, by *exacting* of the mercers what price they please for their manufactured Silk, when the mercers cannot be supplied *but from them*. Thus, continue they, unless the manufacture is put under proper restrictions and limitations, there is all the reason in the world to apprehend the master weavers will be the principal, and perhaps the only

gainers by the bill to prohibit foreign manufactured Silks. *Chi maneggia bruneggia*. Consequently, those who are at the head, or rather who have the *sole* management of the manufacture, will be the principal gainers by the advantages given to it, and will have it in their power to make an improper use of them, by applying those advantages to their own uses and purposes.

It is right, say they, that the master weavers, like the managers of *all other* things, should have the largest share of the profits resultory from the manufacture; but it is equally just, their share should be in *due* proportion to the profits of the workmen, or to speak more to the purpose, that the earnings of the journeymen should be made *adequate to their labour*, and more in proportion to the gains of the master weavers; otherwise, the advantages desired for the Silk people in general, (by whom is chiefly meant the journeymen weavers) will only serve to *bring riches* to the masters; who, though they must suffer if the manufacture is *distressed*, can better bear the hardships than their poor labourers who are obedient to their nod. Thus they argue, and conclude, that the prohibition of foreign manufactured Silk would put it in the power of the master weavers to step hastily into opulence, and leave others in the lurch; that is, if we admit the conclusion, that they will make an improper use of the advantages to be given for public good to the manufacture, which they are supposed to do two ways; first, by insisting, when none but our manufacture is suffered to be worn, upon what price they please of the mercer, who they will have at their will, and entirely dependent on them, and the mercer must either *shut up shop*, or pay the weaver what price he *chuses to impose*, be it whatever it will. In the
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next place, the master weavers having absolute power over the Silk manufacture, will not only have the mercers at their will, but also do as they please with the journeymen weavers; who being obliged to get daily bread for their families, will be *necessitated* to take whatever price their masters chuse to give them, whereby the masters will secure the chief of the profits to themselves, disregarding the interest of their labourers, the interest of the mercers, and the interest of the Public, *who must pay in proportion to what the mercers give.*

For these two alarming reasons against the master weavers, they think, that if foreign manufactured Silks should be prohibited, it will become necessary, (in order to do justice to the mercers, to the journeymen weavers, and to the Public) to lay the conduct of the master weavers, who are the managers of the Silk manufacture, under due restrictions and limitations, by appointing commissioners to superintend the manufacture, in order to prevent their setting a higher price on their manufactured Silk than is equitable, in proportion to the value of unmanufactured Silk, and the price of labour, and thereby to prevent their exacting on the mercers, who, (though a less considerable and useful body to the nation) are nevertheless intitled to public regard and care.

THIS is the whole of the charge brought against the master weavers, in support of measures to continue the importation of foreign manufactured Silks. From whence I am apt to think, it will be a very great doubt with many, whether the bill *ought to pass* in favour of the weavers, by reason of the inconveniencies here pointed out, and supposed to attend such a measure.

To which, in the first place, I beg leave to observe, that all things have a mixture of conveniencies

encies and ill conveniencies, and are valuable in proportion to the greater degree of the *former*, which is evidently the present case; for however alarming it may appear to be, to invest the master weavers with a despotic power over a manufacture of so much importance to the nation, those fears must necessarily subside after putting the case in a *true light*, whereby, if I am not greatly mistaken, I shall entirely confute this argumentation, and leave nothing to obstruct the success, or prevent the good consequences from happening to the satisfaction of the whole nation.

To set this matter in a clear and true light, let us consider the distinct interests of the master weavers, the journeymen weavers, and the mercers; and the connection or relation which one branch has to the other, and to the whole community, whereby we shall be able to found the clearest argument, and to deduce the most rational consequences.

It is the interest of the master weavers, who have the management of the manufactory, to be upon good terms both with their journeymen and the mercers; and so far from being able to give laws to, or to impose upon either, they are greatly dependent on both, as I shall demonstrate. And first, with regard to their men, their works being of different kinds, they necessarily employ as many different hands; and that it may be manufactured in a masterly manner, the better to answer their purpose, they must not only keep terms with their labourers, but are often induced to give them *more for their labour* than the work will conveniently afford; which is a proof that the journeymen are not so much dependent on their masters as those of other branches are, nor so much as the public apprehends; and consequently it
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proves, that the master weavers cannot impose upon them; but, on the contrary, the masters are glad to get good hands, at an *advanced* price when the manufacture flourishes; and there is no doubt, but it is as much their inclination to give *full* employment and *due* encouragement to their men, as it is their interest to keep as many working as they can. Thus, methinks, it must be obvious to the dullest comprehension, that the interests of the masters and journeymen weavers are the same; and that therein the *former* cannot pinch or impose upon, or make any improper use of their superiority over the *latter*, in the capacity of masters. As a farther proof of this truth, let it be remembered, that the profits of the masters are in proportion to the quantity of manufactured goods they sell, which depends on the neatness of the workmanship, so that it is pretty obvious, the labourer, on whom that circumstance depends, has great share of merit, and consequently renders himself so necessary, that there is no doing without him, and therefore it must be his own fault if he does not work, and is not paid proportionably. This is certainly so obvious to the lowest understanding, that I shall venture to repeat, that the interests of the master and man in the Silk manufacture are inseparable; and if we put the case in that light, every fear of the masters dealing unfair with the men, to serve their own purposes alone, must necessarily vanish.

Now, let us consider how the case stands between the master weavers and the mercers, whose interests, when rightly understood, are the same; and if they *draw* together, cannot fail of promoting their mutual advantage, as well as that of the public.

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As the gains of the master weavers are undoubtedly proportioned to the *quantity they sell*, they are first dependent on the journeymen for the neatness of the work, and in the next place, on the mercer for the *sale of their goods*, which is so absolutely necessary for them to accomplish, that it is their interest to be upon terms of friendship with their buyers the mercers, on whose good liking they are more dependent than, perhaps, any other branch is on its customers. First, because they have *only* the mercers to buy of them; and next, because their goods are *perishable*, especially the richest sort, which not only is hurt by laying on their hands, but also becomes out of fashion. So that a pattern, that is worth 20s. a yard this season, shall not be worth 16s. the next, which is a great difference in so valuable a commodity, and serves to show how much people are mistaken, in supposing the weaving trade has the advantage over their customers the mercers, on whom, it is plain, the weavers are *greatly dependent*, and therefore have it not in their power to give law to the mercers, or to apply the advantages to their own uses and purposes. But that, according to the nature of the manufacture, and the connection and dependence that one branch has on the other, the advantages, if they agree, will necessarily be divided between them both, of which the mercers bid fairest for the *greatest share*.

Thus the case of the weavers with regard to the mercers is widely different to the sense of some people, who have quite inverted the order and nature of things; for instead of the weavers having absolute power over the manufacture, and instead of their being able to make an improper use of their *supposed* power, it is the mercers that have greatly the advantage over them.

It is plainly obvious to every man's sense of things, that the weavers sole dependence must be on the mercers trade, which supplies the inhabitants with *their goods*, whence the Public may be assured it is the interest of the weavers to please their customers, in order to get their goods off their hands, on account of their being perishable and becoming out of fashion, which subjects them to great diminution of price ; and this becomes still the more necessary, in order to make room for a fresh stock of new patterns, as every one knows, that the mercers trade requires great variety.

CONSIDERED in this light, which is a true state of the case, methinks the mercers trade has greatly the advantage over the weavers ; for the *former* can suit themselves from hand to mouth, as it were, whereas the *latter* are obliged to keep working on, upon an uncertainty, and to depend upon the pleasure of the mercers for their custom. And indeed, it appears to me, that the mercers have so much the upper hand, that if the bill *does not pass* in favour of the weavers, they will be entirely at the mercy of the mercers, who will have it in their power *totally to ruin the weavers, and to banish our Silk manufacture*, which is already upon a worse footing than that of France ; for the French are not under the disadvantages which we labour under *of having rivals in their own country, or of selling their stale goods to so much loss as we do ; because, when a pattern is out of fashion* with them they send it *to us*, and our good gentry the mercers put it off for a *new thing*, while our works stand still. In this manner the French get rid of their remnants and refuse *to advantage* ; while our weavers are considerable losers for want of the *consumption given to foreign goods to such a degree,*
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that if these practices are indulged, it is manifest, the French manufactures will flourish by selling their refuse to us, and our own, that employs so many THOUSANDS, must inevitably be ruined, and with it the Lord knows who and what; which is so evident, that those who are unwilling to own it, may yet be ashamed to deny it.

I HAVE chosen to be pretty extensive upon this case of the weavers and mercers, to show how much people are mistaken, in thinking the master weavers are become *over rich* from the success of the Silk manufacture, and that they will have it in their power to apply the benefits they are soliciting for, to their own uses and purposes. The contrary of which doth clearly appear.

As to laying the manufacture under restrictions and limitations by a superintendence, it is absolutely impossible to do it; nor indeed is there any occasion for it, now I have proved it to be out of the weavers power to deal unfairly. Nor is it possible for the master weavers to *combine together* to support the prices of their manufacture, when the mercers are allowed to get no other, for this plain reason, because there are, as it is well known, seven or eight hundred master weavers in this metropolis, who are not only independent, but also extremely jealous the one of the other; so that if it was to be granted, that two or three hundred, or more, if you please, were to form themselves into a combination to keep up the prices of their Silks, it would not be in their power to succeed in the attempt; because, while they are *thus combining* the rest keep working, and are at liberty to sell (as the mercers are at liberty to buy where they chuse) which there is no doubt but they will rather do than follow the example of the combination, in order to be able to make fresh goods,

goods, and keep their works going, that they may return their money, and pay their journeymen and the silkmen (advert to that) and also to get a reasonable subsistence. Whereby the schemes of the combination would be entirely defeated, to the very great loss of the combiners, who would not know what to do with their stock of goods. Nor would it be in the power of all the master weavers together, (supposing every one of them were to join the combination) to succeed in an attempt of this sort; because it is not possible for them to be *long at a stand*, as their money must circulate to pay the *continual demands which the Silk merchants* have upon them for unmanufactured Silk. For which very substantial reason, it would also be out of the power of the master weavers to take any unfair advantage of the mercers by imposing any hardships on them. There is a necessary connection between the two trades, because they depend on each other, and are equally sufferers by being at a *stand*; for it is with *them* the same as it is with all other branches of trade (but more particularly the case of manufacturies) the advantage depends on a due circulation of money by quick returns. Therefore manifest it is, that it rests with the mercers to agree with the weavers, in order to advance the manufacture of Silk to its highest pitch and perfection; which cannot happen unless both professions agree. Confidence and reciprocal faith are the only sure and permanent foundation for their mutual success. It is therefore greatly to be wished, that the mercers may join their endeavours, and *then* the good consequences I have mentioned will naturally flow from the reason of things; and I am very confident, there is no man that understands any thing of manufactures but clearly sees and will own it. And

upon the whole, I beg leave to observe, that the further we search, and the nearer we look into the Silk manufacture, the more we shall be convinced of the *necessity for passing the bill in favour of the weavers*; which would be of great benefit to *other branches* of trade that they are linked to for their continual wants; for when the weavers are unemployed, the distress does not rest with them *alone*, but affects all other trades, that are equally at a stand, and suffer with them.

To sum up this argument, what I have all along laboured for, and wherein I flatter myself I have not been unsuccessful, is to demonstrate the utility of the Silk manufacture to this nation; and that the advantages are equally beneficial to the Public, as they are to the individual persons belonging to the manufactory; and that the means of thriving, and whatever conduces to the welfare and happiness of private persons, must have the same effect upon the whole community. Let us therefore secure to ourselves the *whole advantages* of the said manufacture, and not permit foreigners to rob us of our property, or share it with us; for when they are *excluded*, I do not question but we shall adjust all differences among ourselves, and divide the advantages in due proportion between the masters and journeymen weavers, the mercers, and the Public.

BUT so long as foreign wrought Silks are sold in Great Britain, there will not be a sufficient consumption of our own, and consequently our people will not have employment *enough*, which is *all* that they ask and desire. It is *full* employ, and not an encrease of wages, that they request; therefore let us, I say, join our endeavours in favour of the British Silk manufacture, that these people may get an honest and comfortable livelihood,

hood, for the sake of *them* and the Public. And let no body be displeased with the supposed riches of the master weavers (which is all mere conjecture) nor produce it as a reason to continue the importation of foreign manufactured Silks; for, according to my principle, national advantage is in proportion to national wealth, which again is in proportion to the wealth of the inhabitants of a manufacturing and trading nation, for which reason I rejoice at the opulence of my fellow subjects, wherein, methinks, I have some concern, as being an advantage to the state, whereof I am a subject and well-wisher; and this principle I find powerfully prompts me to exert myself vigorously for the interest of my country. According to my principle (which methinks cannot be disproved) the riches of the master weavers would (if it were true) be a great benefit to the public, and therefore *that consideration* ought not to be assigned as a reason for *not* giving further encouragement to the weavers trade. It is not the supposition (which, as I said before, is mere conjecture) of the master being rich, that ought to *determine* public measures about the Silk manufacture. The *thing* in question not depending on that point. But the *questions* are, whether there be *still* room for greater encouragement than is *at present* given, to advance the manufacture to the highest pitch and perfection? And whether *that room* for further encouragement be really and truly conducive to the advantage of the community in general, compatible with the due attention which ought to be had to the interests of the respective bodies of particular persons composing *that* community, without partiality to either side, more than the nature of a public concern and advantage requires?

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THESE, I say, are the great questions upon this point, whereof the true solution will sufficiently shew us, what *measures* we must necessarily pursue; about which there can be no doubt, as I have proved, that whatever encouragement has hitherto been given, there *still is room for more*, and even a necessity for it. And that further encouragement, if granted, will be greatly conducive to the advantage of the public, as well as to that of the weavers, the mercers, and other people concerned in the Silk business, with impartial regard to their respective professions and interests. Whence, I hope, our superiors will see the necessity not only of passing the bill to prohibit foreign wrought Silk, but also for taking off the *whole duty on raw Silk*, that the material of our Silk manufacture may be imported *free of duties*, for the encouragement of that very valuable branch the throwsters trade; and for the relief of thousands that get their bread by it: since it can be made appear, that there are at present above *four thousand* persons, chiefly women and children, *unemployed* in the Silk throwing business, who *formerly* earned a comfortable subsistence, but are *now* real objects of compassion. We have the greater reliance on this favourable solution, as the weavers have received promises to that effect, which, it is to be hoped will be performed, though the North Briton apprehends they *were never meant to be executed*.

THUS, I hope to have said enough to shew the necessity there is *for passing the bill to prohibit foreign manufactured Silks*. And enough to expose the weakness of those who have so great a passion for things foreign. I will but add one thing more to shew the folly of this nation. And that is this; the countenance given to Italian fingers. Men (says Dr. Tillotson) generally stand very much upon

upon the credit and reputation of their understandings, and of all things in the world hate to be accounted fools, because it is so great a reproach. Can there be a greater reflexion on the good sense of the English, or a greater disparagement to their understanding, than to give about TWO THOUSAND POUNDS to *One* of them, for uttering what no British audience can receive any satisfaction from, unless it be that of being thought *connoisseurs* of the unmanly performance of these *Castrati*. *Cbi fanno Coglioni senz'averne*. It is recorded, that a lady of quality distinguished herself by a gift of 100l. for a ticket on his benefit night, to her everlasting honour. And I have no doubt but the lady's fancy was tickled, or her inclination provoked, when she gave so striking an instance of her patriotic disposition to encourage *real* merit. But how much more agreeable does it sound in an English ear, to hear that a gentleman of the city, proprietor of Silk mills at Derby, when unwrought Silks were either scarce, or too dear to be worked up by his mills, humanely and generously paid the people belonging to them, their usual price of hire, without having their labour for it, because they must have starved without employ or pay. This indeed is an action that deserves to be recorded to the honour of Mr. Lloyd (for that is the gentleman's name). I ask his pardon, for making this public mention of it without his knowledge, which I am induced to do in justice to so much goodness, that is highly deserving of emulation. And is, methinks, a convincing proof of the truth of the observation made by foreigners, that the mind of an Englishman naturally determines him to assist the distressed.

It would be *unjust* to complain of the industry of the French tradesmen, while we countenance Italian singers, and give more to *one* of them to sing

ling *one season*, than an Englishman, possessed of *manly* qualities, that are an honour to himself, and a credit to his country, can acquire in a number of years. And it is absurd, in the highest degree, to be eager at an immense expence, after what we do not comprehend, nor can receive the smallest benefit from; (for, as Dr. Tillotson observes, it is hard to imagine how men can be edified by what they do not understand) to enrich a being of no sex, which is a disgrace to nature, and a reproach to those who countenance it. And as I have said before, we should be inconsistent with ourselves to exclaim against one *folly*, and at the same time encourage one still greater. With which I shall conclude, and I have good reason to hope, that every impartial reader will confess, I have said nothing but what the nature of things has necessarily obliged me to mention.

I am, again, the Public's

most respectful servant,

A CITIZEN.

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